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CARLYLE AS A CLASSICIST¹

A notable article by Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, in Scribner's Magazine for January, 1919, reveals the Senator from Massachusetts as worthy of rank with the greatest of literary statesmen. His eulogy of authors whose works are luminous with familiar quotations was the more remarkable from the fact that there was in his paper no mention of Thomas Carlyle.

To be sure, the shadow of pro-Germanism hangs over the Chelsea shrine in Cheyne Row, and the Sage was not always wise in his utterances about slavery and about America, but he deserves no dyslogia of silence when the masters of quotation are proclaimed. The Senator from Massachusetts explained that he had not included Burton because of his far-fetched and curious extracts from unread folios, or Sterne, because he simply robbed Burton and thus helped himself to produce one of the great books of English literature. Perhaps this explains the omission of Carlyle, for to the Anatomy of Melancholy and to Tristram Shandy Carlyle owed much for the marvellous wealth of allusion in his French Revolution, which is generally considered his masterpiece and one of the noblest prose-poems of all time.

So many biographers have belittled Carlyle's knowledge of Latin and Greek authors that there seems to be a prevailing belief that he rarely used classical quotation or allusion. Roe's Carlyle as Critic of Literature gives extracts from a letter written by Carlyle in 1816 which leave the reader with the impression that Carlyle knew almost nothing about Homer and that, though he was reading Lucan's Pharsalia, "no doubt <he was reading it> in translation". Perhaps Mr. Roe did not notice that Carlyle had not read above seven lines of Lucan (Early Letters, 32). One hardly proceeds so leisurely with a 'pony'.

In the essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson we find "Stat PARVI nominis umbra" as proof of Carlyle's acquaintance with the text of the Pharsalia. Similar testimony is given by passages in the French Revolution: "Cazalès shall become the eloquent orator of royalism and earn the shadow of a name". "Some name or shadow of a brave Bouillé"².

In the French Revolution, in the famous chapter entitled The Procession, we find "The victorious cause pleased the gods, the vanquished one pleased Sieyes (*victa Catoni*)", an echo of Pharsalia 1.128. Loménie's Death-Throes has this: "In the hour of his extreme jeopardy, the lion first incites himself by roaring, by lashing his sides". This is, clearly, an echo of Pharsalia 1.208. The first line of Lucan's epic, with its *plus quam civilia bella*, evidently suggested the "wars more than civil" of the Mirabeau and Esterházy at Saint-Cloud chapters.

Many of the literary echoes in Carlyle's works fall on deaf ears. A reader may be fairly familiar with Juvenal and still fail to perceive that a sentence of Patrologism is almost a literal translation of *Luci bonus est odor ex re qualibet*. The sentence runs: "the smell of all cash, as Vespasian says, is good". In the Maurepas chapter, Beaumarchais is described as inspired by the indignation which makes, if not verses, satirical law-papers. Of course we ought to think at once of the line, *Si natura negat, facit indignatio versus*, but the chances are that we shall fail to do so. In The Procession, Danton is pictured as an esurient advocate. Perhaps the *Graeculus esuriens* of Juvenal's third Satire was in Carlyle's mind. The Day of Poniards ends with the sentence: "If they hurled Poseidon Lafayette and his Constitution out of Space; and in the Titanic melly, sea were mixed with sky?". Juvenal 2.25 runs, *Quis caelum terris non misceat et mare caelo?*

The chapter entitled In Fight has this:

Virtuous Pétion rose to lament these effervescences, this endless anarchy invading the legislative sanctuary itself; and here, being growled at and howled at by the Mountain, his patience, long tried, did, as we say, boil over.

One is tempted to refer the Latin proverb, *furor fit laesa saepius patientia*, which Carlyle had here in mind, to Juvenal, but Publilius Syrus is its author.

In a letter from Jane Welsh, written in 1824, we read:

Tell our worthy Doctor to write me out a recipe for patience, the stock which I received from nature being well-nigh exhausted, or converted into furor.

In the chapter entitled Louis the Unforgotten we read:

Frightful to all men is death, from of old King of Terrors. The heathen emperor asks of his soul, Into what places art thou now departing?

Some ten years before writing this chapter, Carlyle had seen in Burton's Anatomy, *Animula vagula, blandula, quae nunc abibis in loca?*, and the verses of Hadrian were thenceforth for him unforgettable.

In the Sound and Smoke chapter we find the sentence:

O if, according to Seneca, the very gods look down on a good man struggling with adversity and smile; what must they think of five-and-twenty million indifferent ones victorious over it,—for eight days and more?

This is another instance of Carlyle's indebtedness to Burton enriching his vocabulary with new words and allusions.

In The Wakeful chapter is this:

Nineteen hundred years ago, Julius Caesar, with his quick sure eye, took note how the Gauls waylaid men. "It is a habit of theirs", says he, "to stop travelers, were it even by constraint, and inquire whatsoever each of them may have heard or known about any sort of matter".

One finds in the Anatomy of Melancholy II. 2.4:

We are most part too inquisitive and apt to harken after news, which Caesar in his Commentaries observes of the old Gauls, they would be inquiring of every carrier and passenger what they had heard or seen, what news abroad?

¹This paper was read at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, at Haverford College, April 1, 1919.

²There are so many editions of the French Revolution that the references to the work are misleading; one finds many errors even in the Oxford Dictionary and in the Century. In this article the title of the chapter will be used as guide.

The original aphorism in *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, "the true university of these days is a collection of books", came straight from the heart of the author. Some passages from the essay on *Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson*, descriptive of the great Samuel, are strikingly applicable to Carlyle himself. Johnson had had the training of a School and a University.

Good knowledge of the Latin tongue, a more uncertain one of Greek: this is a rather slender stock of education wherewith to front the world. But then it is to be remembered that his world was England; that such was the culture that England commonly supplied and expected. Besides, Johnson has been a voracious reader, though a desultory one, and oftenest, in strange, scholastic, too obsolete libraries. Above all, be his weapons what they may, he has an arm that can wield them. Nature has given him her choicest gift: an open eye and heart.

Carlyle was not quite fourteen years old when he entered the University of Edinburgh, in November, 1809. He had had four years of schooling at Annan Academy, where he was well grounded in Latin and French, and had learned the Greek alphabet. He was enrolled in the First Humanity (Latin) Class and in the First Greek Class. There is no record that he took a second year in Humanity. Of his two years of work with Professor Dunbar, who afterwards published a Greek dictionary which was long a standard, Professor Masson says little. He mentions the *Elementa Linguae Graecae*, the Greek Grammar probably used in Dunbar's classes, and also the Latin Grammar of that time. He had heard Carlyle say that any Scotsman who was at a loss on the subject of *shall* and *will* would find the whole doctrine in a nutshell in two or three lucid sentences of Dr. Adam's Latin Grammar; and he had an idea at the time that Carlyle had used this brief precept in his own early practice of English. It has been remarked by critics that Carlyle never misused *shall* and *will*. Professor Masson discovered proofs of Carlyle's extensive reading at Edinburgh, and in his *Sketches and Memories* quoted as follows from Carlyle's Rectorial Address of 1866:

What I have found the University did for me is that it taught me to read in various languages, in various sciences, so that I could go into the books which treated of these things and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me.

In the Rectorial Address, previously mentioned, Carlyle, after telling the students about the importance of the history of the Greeks and the Romans, said that the languages of these nations were admitted to be the most perfect orders of speech yet found to exist among men. He also referred to the revolution in his own mind on getting hold of Heyne's *Vergil*.

When there are so many indications of Carlyle's appreciation of the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome, Dr. Nichol's statement that Carlyle was never in any sense a "classic" seems unjust. The fact that Carlyle read the three volumes of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* from cover to cover ought of itself to make him a classicist.

It would be interesting to know something definite about the Greek courses at Edinburgh in Carlyle's collegiate days. In the *Reminiscences* we read of his tutoring Charles Buller in 1822, and of the enjoyment derived from the experience. The young student was in the Third Greek Class at the University, and Carlyle considered his classical knowledge superior to his own, so that he had to prepare his own lessons carefully in advance by way of keeping Buller to his work with Professor Dunbar.

A quotation in Greek from Plutarch about Demosthenes and Phocion which appears in the last volume of the French Revolution and was repeated in the Rectorial Address of 1866 was a favorite with Carlyle all his life. There are other indications of familiarity with Plutarch, and one conjectures that the Greek class-room at Edinburgh rather than the library was the original inspiration of much of Carlyle's Hellenic knowledge.

The title-page of each of the three original volumes of the French Revolution had a quotation, in Greek, from Arrianus, and another, also in Greek, from Antoninus. A letter from Carlyle to Thomas Murray, in July, 1818, contains a Greek quotation from the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus which shows his interest in Greek philosophy when he was twenty-two years of age. The passage, which comes from the end of Chapter V of the *Enchiridion*, may be translated thus:

'It is characteristic of an uneducated man to blame others for his own acts; for one beginning to be instructed to blame himself, but for the educated to blame neither another nor himself'.

In Carlyle's Notebook of 1827 there was this entry:

Heyne's *Virgil*, Leipzig 1803. This book I must have. The Homer I long to see. O that I could read it!

Pope's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had long been familiar to Carlyle, and the essay on *Boswell*, published in 1832, has a reference to Homer's peasants, "blessing the useful light", a clear echo of *Iliad* 8.555. In 1834 Carlyle read several books of Homer in the original with his young friend Glen, at Craigenputtock, and the horologe of time marked a new Grecian era for him. An entry in his diary, on February 13, 1834, mentioned his satisfaction with Homer, "the pleasantest, most purely poetical reading for a long time". Henceforth Homer's *Iliad* became for Carlyle a literary force second only to the Bible, and the French Revolution, with its "sea-green Robespierre", "brawny Titan Danton", and "dog-leach Marat", has often been called the *Iliad* of the Terror.

The chapter entitled *The Equal Diet, of The Bastille* volume, has this picturesque sentence:

The nourishing baskets circulate harmoniously along the benches; nor, according to the Father of Epics, did any soul lack a fair share of victual. . . .

The Homeric allusions are so numerous and obvious in the *Iliad* of the Terror that further detail is needless. A paper on *The Influence of Homer on Carlyle* was read before the Western Massachusetts Section of The Classical Association of New England, at Williams College,

October 23, 1909, by Professor Helen Flint, and was published in *The Classical Journal* 5.118-128 (January, 1910). This paper thoroughly discussed the evidence. One might suggest, however, that Carlyle's description of the Tennis-Court scene, "Thither, in long-drawn files, hoarse-jingling, like cranes on wing, the commons deputies angrily wend", is an echo of Goethe's Helena. Carlyle's own rendering, as given in the essay on Goethe's Helena, published in 1828, is "like the cranes' hoarse jingling flight". Goethe has been called a German Greek; and one reason for Carlyle's deep reverence for this master is kindred love of the Classics.

Mr. R. L. Fletcher, in his edition of the French Revolution, might have explained a certain sentence of the Charlotte Corday chapter, "but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant to the shades below", as an echo of Vergil's *Vitae cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*, but he explained it not.

No biographer does full credit to Carlyle as a Latinist. His letters to Emerson from 1835 to 1871 show a constant interest in the Classics, and such sentences as "If thou wish me to believe, do thou thyself believe first: this is as true as that of the *flere* and *dolendum*" indicate a thorough appreciation of Horace.

The London Critic, of November 1, 1852, printed an interview with Carlyle in Berlin, wherein he was quoted as criticizing the collegiate education of the time by saying "a taste for the absurd being carefully and assiduously cultivated, 'from the tender nails', as Horace says".

In his *Frederick*, written about 1860, the following shows how indelibly the *flere* and *dolendum* allusion is engraved upon his memory.

Men who have come to help you in a heavy job of work need example. If you wish me to weep, be grieved yourself first of all. Soltikoff angrily wipes his countenance at this point, and insists on a few tears from Daun.

In *The Improvised Commune* chapter is this:

But, as Horace says, they wanted the sacred Memoir-writer (*sacro vate*); and we know them not.

Carlyle in many of his works referred to this Horatian idea, and often used *vates* as an English word. Thus, in 1840, he wrote to Emerson about Sterling and his reading and wondered what he would say of "the American Vates", meaning Ralph Waldo Emerson himself.

There are three echoes of the last line of the first Ode of Horace in the French Revolution, and twenty other Horatian allusions not previously mentioned in this paper. And yet we are told that Carlyle did not appreciate Horace, and rarely made any classical allusion. Vergilian echoes in the French Revolution are more frequent than those from any other Latin writer, but there is not time for them. One finds in *The Diamond Necklace* this description of Cardinal Rohan:

Some nine-and-forty winters have now fled over his eminence (for it is 1783), and his beard falls white to the shaver.

How many readers ever catch the bucolic echo here (see *Eclogues* 1)?

The same prose-poem, *The Necklace*, has *varium semper et mutabile*, with some variations; and also the touching apostrophe to Marie Antoinette:

Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low!
For, if thy being came to thee out of old Hapsburg
dynasties, came it not also (like my own) out of Heaven?
Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

In *Past and Present* one notes the words, "the roar of greedy Acheron", without any quotation marks, as indicative of a thorough familiarity with the Mantuan bard, and many Latin quotations from the old monkish records. Books like the *Religio Medici* of Dr. Thomas Browne were read eagerly by Carlyle and the classical allusions in them were invariably noted, as may be proved by subsequent use of *certum est quia impossibile* and *abii ad plures*. It is amusing to ascertain that the date of entry of a word like *deliquium* in the Notebook usually precedes but little its appearance in book or essay.

Carlyle's memory was phenomenally accurate, but occasionally it played him false by making him confuse *specula* and *speculum*, *Peneus* and *Pentheus*, *Anaxarchus* and *Anaxagoras*. But his biographers have done him a grave injustice in regard to the Classics. Even Dr. Garnett, whose biography is usually considered the best, damns him in this connection with faint praise.

We have already referred to Carlyle's partiality for phrases like Horace's 'striking the stars with sublime head.' One finds Horace's 'nights and suppers of the gods' over and over again in Carlyle's letters and works, as also Vergil's *Sunt lacrimae*, and such proverbs as *Ubi homines sunt modi sunt*.

This paper may fitly end with illustrations of another favorite, only recently noticed by the compiler.

Carlyle's essay on Voltaire, published in 1829, has this:

For it is not in the power of all Xerxes's hosts to bend one thought of our proud heart: these "may destroy the case of Anaxarchus; himself they cannot reach".

Apparently Carlyle confused Xerxes and Alexander the Great here. Diogenes Laertius gives the story in his Greek life of the philosopher Anaxarchus, but Carlyle may have got it from Cicero or Ovid.

Cruthers and Jonson, published in *Fraser's Magazine*, in 1831, has this:

Frequently they came to sparring, in which they would exhibit all the energy of Entellus and Dares. The boy Cruthers was decidedly the better boxer; he was stronger than Jonson, could beat him whenever he chose; and in time came to choose it pretty often. Jonson had more of the Socratic than of the Stoic philosopher in his turn of mind. He could not say "Thou mayest beat the case of Jonson, himself thou canst not reach"; on the contrary he felt too clearly that himself was reached, and as all his attempts to remedy the evil but made it worse, the exasperation of his little heart was extreme.

The essay on Count Cagliostro appeared in 1833 and continued the illustration thus:

One summer morning of the year 1795, the body of Cagliostro is still found in the prison at St. Leo; but Cagliostro's self has escaped—whither no man yet knows.

The Diamond Necklace (1837) varied the wording a little:

Cagliostro's body still lying in St. Leo Castle, his self fled—whither?

In the French Revolution, in the chapter entitled *The Night of Spurs*, we find this:

Not the King shall ye stop here under this your miserable archway; but his dead body only, and answer it to heaven and earth.

Also in the chapter *In Civil War*, we read:

Rebecqui disappeared; no one knew whither; till, one morning, they found the empty case or body of him risen to the top, tumbling on the salt waves; and perceived that Rebecqui had withdrawn forever.

The present deponent makes no claim of completeness, but ends the *Anaxarchus* list with an eloquent passage from *Past and Present*, published in 1843, in the chapter entitled *The Gifted*:

The heavens, unwearying in their bounty, do send souls into this world, to whom yet, as to their forerunners, in old Roman, in old Hebrew and all noble times, the omnipotent guinea is, on the whole, an impotent guinea. Such soul, once graduated in Heaven's stern University, steps out superior to your guinea.

Dost thou know, O sumptuous corn-lord, cotton-lord, this man is not a slave with thee! His place is with the stars of heaven. The joys of earth that are precious, they depend not on thee and thy promotions. Food and raiment and round a social hearth, souls that love him, whom he loves, these are already his. He wants none of thy rewards; behold also he fears none of thy penalties. Thou canst not answer even by killing him; the case of *Anaxarchus* thou canst kill; but the self of *Anaxarchus*, the word or act of *Anaxarchus*, in no wise whatever³.

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THOMAS FLINT.

THE DISSERTATIONS OF THE ROMAN PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF ARCHAEOLOGY

As the world gradually recovers its poise from the shock of the great war, we proceed to look about us and take stock of what is left. In the case of the scholar, reports on foreign publications, which in normal times had their uses, possess a special function of utility in the days of reconstruction. Hence, when my friends in the *Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* expressed the desire that some account of the Academy and of its annual publication should appear in the scholarly journals of America, it seemed peculiarly proper to accede to their request, not merely on the personal grounds of giving a slight return for the courtesy which has been shown to American scholars by this venerable institution during the war, but in the hope of doing a service to those who are far away from Rome.

The Pontifical Academy is international in character, both in its traditions and in the aims of its present

³Even a careless reader of Carlyle must be struck by his frequent employment of that classical figure, *litotes*.

officers; but, in the nature of the case, the preponderance of its membership is Italian, and the greater part of the articles which appear in its publication are the product of Italian scholarship. It is well that the value of the work done by the Italians should be emphasized at the present time.

Volume XIII of the Second Series of the Academy's *Dissertations* appeared in 1918, and represents work done during troubled times. Its predominating interest lies in the field of Christian antiquities, but Egyptology and classical archaeology are represented, the latter by a note on the name of Rome, a treatment of the representations of military standards on the arch of Constantine, and one of the sanctuary at Praeneste. The articles which deal primarily with the early Christian period contain much matter of value to the classical student, especially Styger's long publication of the remains beneath the Basilica of St. Sebastian on the Appian Way, with its twenty-five plates of graffiti and the colored reproduction of a wall-painting of the first century. The palaeographer too will be grateful for the eighteen reproductions of Latin inscriptions of the ninth century which accompany an article by Grossi-Gondi on the epigraphic palaeography of that period. The late Commendatore Rivoira's treatment of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem is one of the most important contributions of recent years to the study of Constantinian architecture, and confirms the position already held by its author that Rome and not the Orient was the mother of mediaeval art.

Volume XIV of this series is now in the press, and will prove of exceptional interest for the student of Etruscan antiquities.

AMERICAN ACADEMY AT ROME.

A. W. VAN BUREN.

SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN FELLOWSHIPS IN FRENCH UNIVERSITIES

The Society for American Fellowships in French Universities has recently issued a pamphlet of twenty pages, setting forth the purpose of the Society and the conditions of awards of Fellowships, and a draft of the By-Laws of the Society. The purpose is stated to be "to assist in establishing, in its proper place of eminence in the mind of the American public, the standing and repute of French scholarship . . . , and to encourage the development of a body of University scholars who by personal acquaintance with French achievements will be in a position to restore in all branches of American public opinion the just status of French science and learning and a better appreciation of the place of France in the leadership of the world". Attention is called to a volume entitled *Science and Learning in France*, in which information was given concerning the opportunities afforded in the French Universities in all branches of learning (see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 11.167-168). To further these ends, the Society will distribute each year as many as twenty-five Fellowships to be apportioned among "the various fields of science". The "fields of science" will be those mentioned in the volume on *Science and Learning in France*, XI-XII. The Fellowships are of the value of \$1000 a year each,